UNITED
NATIONS

A

General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/45/649/Add.1
6 November 1990

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Forty-fifth session
Agenda items 12, 107 and 123

REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER
FOR REFUGEES

JOINT INSPECTION UNIT

The co-ordination of activities related to early warning of possible refugee flows

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to submit to the General Assembly his comments on the report of the Joint Inspection Unit entitled "The co-ordination of activities related to early warning of possible refugee flows" (A/45/649). The comments of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination on those recommendations which have system-wide implications will be submitted to the General Assembly at a later date.

Comments of the Secretary-General

1. The Secretary-General welcomes the report of the Joint Inspection Unit, which lends further support to the policy of development and operation of early warning systems aimed at averting political or humanitarian crises wherever possible. The report contains information and observations that can be useful in designing the United Nation arrangements for early warning and prevention of possible refugee flows.

2. At the same time, the Secretary-General notes that the report did not sufficiently emphasize the necessity of the development of early warning capacity at the country level and the essential role that can be played by the resident co-ordinators in the early warning process. The appropriate interaction between global, regional and country-level action could have been analysed more extensively in the report.

3. The Secretary-General agrees with the Unit that the envisaged arrangement should extend to all displaced persons and not just to refugees as defined in the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees. 1/ However, the Secretary-General notes that the involvement of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in early warning activities would have to take into account the scope of its mandate, as defined by the General Assembly and by the 1951 Convention.

4. On factual aspects, the following points are noted.

Department of Public Information (A/45/649, para. 50)

5. The number of United Nations information centres referred to has now reached 67.

United Nations University: a Global Early Warning System for Displaced Persons under a Univeristy project (ibid., paras. 85-89)

6. The University is not currently involved directly with the "Future of Global Interdependence" model. The University has had some contacts and exchanges of views on the subject with Soka University (Tokyo) where the model is based, but that did not evolve into any substantive participation in or direct use of the model.

Inter-agency co-ordination

7. More attention and recognition could have been given to the role of the computerized system within the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator (UNDRO) for the immediate dissemination of alert messages through which almost daily situation reports on a great variety of natural and man-made emergencies convey evaluated information to several hundred decision makers.

Recommendation 1

8. This recommendation is addressed specifically to the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination (ACC). The General Assembly will have the comments of ACC on this recommendation in due course.

Recommendation 2

9. The Secretary-General will consider possible arrangements for increasing, within the limits of available resources, the capacity of the Office for Research and the Collection of Information in early warning of refugee flows.

Recommendation 3

10. This recommendation is addressed specifically to ACC. The General Assembly will have the comments of ACC on this recommendation in due course.

Recommendation 4

11. The Secretary-General will take measures to expedite the work related to early warning of possible refugee flows, as proposed by the Inspectors.

Recommendation 5

12. The Secretary-General agrees in principle with part (a) of this recommendation. The General Assembly will have the comments of ACC on part (b) of the recommendation in due course.

Notes

1/ United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 189, No. 2545, p. 137.

READEX FICHE